

WN-15J

Mr. Jim Cashman

personal privacy exemption 6

Minneapolis, MN 55418

Dear Mr. Cashman:

I am responding on behalf of Acting Administrator, Catherine McCabe, to your correspondence received on January 30, 2017, by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency expressing concerns about the potential impacts of proposed copper mining in Minnesota. Please be assured that EPA shares your concern about the importance of protecting the water resources in Minnesota.

Mining activities proposed in Minnesota typically require permits under federal law authorizing wastewater discharges as well as discharges of dredged or fill materials into waters of the United States.

While EPA retains oversight responsibilities for these programs, wastewater discharge permitting authority has been delegated to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and discharge of dredged fill is the responsibility of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. EPA is actively engaged with MPCA on issues related to the development of permits to authorize wastewater discharges and intends to review these permits as they are proposed.

You can find more information, including on the proposed Polymet-Northmet copper-nickel mine, at: Minnesota DNR's non-ferrous metallic mining website (http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lands_minerals/metallc_nf/index.html), Minnesota DNR's Polymet-Northmet permitting website (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/polymet/permitting/index.html>), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's website for Polymet-Northmet permitting (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/northmet>), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website for the Polymet-Northmet (<http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/PolyMet.aspx>).

If you wish to further discuss these issues, please contact Krista McKim at (312) 353-8270 or at mckim.krista@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Kaplan
Acting Regional Administrator

Bcc: Barbara Wester, ORC

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